

SONGS IN PRAISE OF GOD



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WITHIN HIS OWN MIND

At the highest octave of His Consciousness,
The One remains whole, unmoved, inactive and unmanifest;
It is only His lower Mind that acts,
that manifests a vast universe of forms,
And permeates the universe that He creates.

Within His own Mind, He creates a universe of Light;
And, by virtue of its presence within the one Mind,
Every particle of that universe is filled with His Consciousness.
And so, in harmony with His all-present Will,
all things move together of one accord;
Assent is given throughout the universe to every falling grain.

Because He is the living presence within His Mind-born universe,
He emerges as animate life and awareness from within the material forms;
And, little by little, He leads His creatures to self-reflection,
and eventually to likeness with Himself.

Then, when His creatures are fully prepared,
He reveals Himself within them
As their origin and indwelling self, their very life and awareness;
And He brings them to completion in the consciousness
that they are none else but Him,
That He alone comprises all that is.

One by one, He leads His creatures to this wonder and
amazement, their ultimate prize;
And when this solitary game of hide-and-seek is
complete, He takes a rest,
And then He begins it all once again. What fun!

* * *

BORN OF HIS LIGHT

Don't you know that we are born of His light,
that every elementary particle of matter began as a photon of light?
Every electron, every quark in the interior of every proton or neutron
 Came into being and acquired its properties
In the transformation of those high-energy photons of light
 streaming out from the Creator's breath.

This world and all worlds sparkling throughout the cosmos
 are made of the radiance of God's power,
 A dancing array of His light's many ephemeral forms.
And we, evolved from His light, are endowed with the spark of
 His conscious Self, and live by His life,
 And love with His love, and know with His wisdom.
We are conscious by His marvelous all-pervading awareness;
We see by His loving grace, and we sing His praise by His gift of song.

Then sing, ye God-born angels of light!
 Raise up your voices to Him
 whose fabric forms your being and appearance,
 Whose life-pulse fires your heart and breath.
Remember Him whose goodness molded you,
 whose love enfolds you,
 Whose existence is the life-stream of your being,
 and whose out-flowing Bliss provides the
 everlasting joy of your soul.

Until we wend our way back into His eternal light, sing forth His praise.

PRAISE GOD

I'm here to sing the praise of God, and so I shall.
And let none think belief's the basis of my song,
Or words I've read in high-flown works;
The subject of my song is what I've seen,
What He's revealed to my most meager sight
In holy quiet night's retreat.

Though many have praised His creation –
Its beauties, and its grandeur;
I would praise Him in His unborn formless Essence
Where He lives unmoved, and happily serene.

Though He breathes forth the immense and tumultuous cosmos,
Enjoying the drama of its unfolding activity,
He remains clearly indivisible
And perfectly unmoved within Himself,
Continually aware that He alone exists.
There is no other; so all's contained in Him.

Serene, yet keenly awake, He spreads
His outflowing radiance in every direction;
Delight, unbounded and uninterrupted,
Permeates Him and all that He proffers.

In one breath, He flashes forth the universal array,
And then withdraws it all again,
Only to breathe once more and fling the stars
And galaxies wheeling on their rounds again.

For creatures, it's an almost endless parade
Of eon upon eon, unfathomably deep in time's recess;
But for him, who knows no change or movement,
It's but a moment's breath.

And yet the greatest wonder is that every soul breathed forth
Is but a time-wrought image of Himself;
And each one, being His by virtue of its life in Him,
Is capable of finding at its core that One who fashioned it to life.

As a figure in a dream awakes to know he is the dreamer,
Each soul, when it awakes, discovers it is none but Him.
He appears as though in a house of many mirrors,
Fragmented into a million images, yet all are Him;
It's but a masquerade.

And when the soul awakes to know its deathless Self,
Beyond imagined dreams of personhood,
It knows that forever it has lived serene and blissful,
Just beyond the dream.

It learns that all the devilish battles and tortuous travails
Were but a thought-parade in which, for the briefest time
It marched, all unawares, to finally break away
And find its way to freedom from time's tumultuous play.

To find such freedom one must look within,
And, gaining clarity of mind, discover who one really is.
Who one really is is Him! For none exists but Him alone.
It's true! He lives alone in high eternity;
But He lives as well as you and me.

It's you and me who lives in that eternal sky
While playing out our destined roles below.
Two selves, one vigilant while tossing out the stars,
The other strutting on this stage of dreams,
Oblivious to the other, her subtler Self and Source.

The all-encompassing, all-sustaining Self of all
Is quite alone, and quite contained
Without a drama to behold,
Until He beams Himself in outward radiance
As particles and galaxies and separate living things
In bright array,
To people all these worlds with beings
Conscious of their knowing selves.

His game: to lead them all within themselves
In stage by stage to knowledge of the ways of things,
And finally to awareness of that deeper Self
Who flung them forth to journey home
To know the ultimate Truth that they are Him.

Awaking to that joyful knowledge,
The spell of separation falls away
Along with fear and worry, woes and cares.
And, lifted up in mind and spirit,
The knower lives in peace and joy beyond this world
Alone, eternal, as all in all.
He knows the universal design to be his own;
He walks in freedom. His soul is blest.

Praise God!

* * *

DO YOU WISH TO KNOW GOD?

Do you wish to know God?

Then pray for His grace. But even that you cannot do
Until the magnet of His Love draws forth your heart's desire.

Do you wish to know God?

That wish is God's own power alive within you drawing you home.
But you must set your wings for flight and soar to heights unknown before,
Releasing all below.

A strong and focused mind will be the wings on which you'll climb to His domain
Where you may offer up your soul to Him and beg for entrance to His heart

If you are steady in your goal, His heart will open wide
and draw you in to make you one with Him.

And then you'll know that you and He were never set apart.
You'll see the universe in you; in you, the universal Self.

Your calling lifts you toward Him, but He responds only in His time.
He will leave you yearning for His love, your heart an abject song.
For He tortures those who love Him with a longing unfulfilled,
And lures us on with sweetness, withholding His embrace.

What pathetic fools He makes of us who bargain all for Him,
Who fill our nights with lonely pleas that He might hear our song!
Addicts of His mercy, we pray He'll bring us home,
And fold us in His sweet embrace as a father does a son.

No doubt, His mercy keeps us there in longing for His touch;
Our hearts grow sweet, our love expands, as we call aloud His name;
And lift our minds and hearts to Him, desiring only Him.
This barb of sorrow, this aching love, upholds us in His grace,
And leads us upward, onward, till one day we shall see His face.

O, who will take me to my Lord? Who will give me wings?
I grow older, Father, every day, and my mind is growing dim.
My eyes are weak, my vision strains to penetrate the dark.
My Lord, I have no other goal but Thee; have mercy on this soul!

* * *

THE LIFE OF A SELF-REALIZED MAN

O the life of a Self-realized man! It's much like yours, my friend;
I feel the prick of ennui and suffer the ignorance of men;
I know the annoying insistence of passions and the trickery of the brain;
I endure the deterioration of the body and its attendant pains,
And the requirements of providing bread for my table and a shelter for my head.

Like you, I muddle through from day to day,
and find a welcome refuge in my bed.
I watch with hope this troubled world, and see no end to pain.

But, O my friends, I've shared eternity with God;
I've seen the infinite, eternal Self of all beyond this bubble of a world;
And deep down know a peace and joy unsullied by this maudlin scene.

I merged into the heart of God and saw the universe explode in form,
And then implode again, a breath-like cycle, endlessly repeated.
I balanced, poised in mindless vision, in His still domain, at one with Him;
And saw no separation or division, nor I or Thou, nor now or then.

The pairs of opposites were no more, but cancelled out
In breathless heights of all-inclusive oneness;
And I knew the everlasting Self of God as me, the only I who ever was.
Though bound, like you, to worldly life, I'm free; my heart is calm and certain.

I know the "I" beyond my role here in this paltry play;
And when I exit from the stage, I'll still be I, backstage,
The One who plays all roles, who lives to ply His art once more
With plots, and lines, and costumes ever new.

And, even now, while taking in the very air you breathe,
And walking on the very shores of time you walk,
I breathe as well the light eternal and walk the hallowed skies.
My heart imbibes the sweetest joy time's shadows can't obscure;
And, like a man with either foot astride a threshold,
I'm here, though I am there.
I walk the world on tiptoe, with my head above the clouds;
My eyes are fixed undeviatingly on God's perpetual smile.
And, though you see me here with you, performing on the boards,
I'm there, in God's unbounded bliss, my own eternal Self.

* * *

THE SIGNATURE OF GRACE

Grace shows itself in the human heart as the quickening of love and sympathy.

It glistens in the beholder's eye in the presence of sunlight streaming
through the pines.

Have you known the quiet stilling of your breath
In the silent sequesterment of night?

Have you dreamed of a mysterious land where smiling sages
Gaze at you in heaven's beauteous light?
Have you longed to be free of the prison of the flesh?
This is the signature of Grace.

Have you sought Him in prayer with a heartbroken plea?
Have your tears poured torrents in longing for closeness to Him?
Have you called on His name through each hour of the day?
Have you waited for Him through the night?
Does He haunt your heart like a lover who's lost?
This is the signature of Grace.

Like a knife through the heart it painfully aches;
It steals you from life's simple play.
It makes a sameness of every fair shape, and leads you to quiet repose
And delight in the high-rising light-streams of thought.
Have you heard His voice breaking through in the night
As you sat watching and listening for Him?
Has His love washed like waves through the desert of your soul?
Have your tears drenched your cheeks as you sat in the dark?
Has a white dove flown, fluttering, straight into your heart?
This is the signature of Grace.

One sweet silent night He will lift up your mind
to a height you have not before known;
He will draw forth your soul from its naked pure depths,
and open a deep inner eye.
You'll see with His sight; you'll know with His knowing;
You'll realize you are always His own.
Like a wave on His ocean, you'll see who you are, and know that the ocean is you.
He is your center, the Beloved you've sought, the very foundation of your soul.
And He will reveal it; He'll heal all your doubts, and lift you up to His heart.
He'll thrill you with knowledge and reveal all His art.
For this is the signature of Grace.

* * *

THEY ASK ME

They ask me, "How can man and God be one?
It makes no sense; it can't be understood."
I answer, "He is all, and all are He!
No other exists but Him; so who are you?"

Becoming one with God is just the realization
Of what is and has always been true.
The self you think you are is only a mirage;
The Self you've always been is that eternal One.

We go about in our illusory shells,
Identifying with the dance of atoms,
A mere framework of form and ideas.
But only when He opens wide our inner eye
Is it revealed that we are Him and He is us.

This truth is not so easily perceived;
It's hidden by the power He wields.
And even when it's once revealed,
It's hard to hold; it slips away.

We pray, we concentrate our minds on Him,
And search our inner sky for that all-revealing Sun.
We shut out all distracting thoughts,
And open up our souls to Him.
Yet rarely does the clear light dawn
That shows our own eternal face.

More often we rely on thoughts inspired
That come to us as wisdom from on high.
Our prayers, our yearning hearts, uplift us
To that place where thought runs pure and clear;
And in this way we come to know His presence deep within.

But those who've gained His favor know a higher vision still;
His Grace reveals the truth of truths:
The Self of all is I!

They ask me, "How can man and God be one?"
I ask them, "In the Unity that is His all-inclusive Self,
How can you imagine there are two?
If nothing else exists but God,
Then who, on earth, are you?"

* * *

WHEN YOU SING THE NAME OF GOD IN YOUR HEART

When you sing the name of God in your heart,
When you sing the name of God in your heart,
 The curtains of your soul then part
 And the truth comes streaming in.

When you sing the name of God in your heart,
 A new awareness dawns,
 And the voice that called is silenced
 In the silence that is Him.

Who calls? Whose awareness sings of God?
Who stands behind the calling and the song?
 The very breath that sings His name
 Is He whose name is called.

The caller recognizes suddenly from whence the song arose
And turns his attention to the "I" from whom all "I"s derive.
 The consciousness that seeks His embrace
 Is conscious of itself, above the breathing, beneath the song,
 And finds, amazed, the One it sought.

How delicate the thread that holds this knowledge close!
 Awareness held aloft upon its very Self!
 No call, no song; but only flawless clarity of mind
 Above the clamor of the song and breath,
 Above the sense of self.

This eternal breathless sky of Mind
Is the Source of breath and song;
The seeker and the One who's sought
Reveal that they are one.

* * *

WHEN YOU KNOW ETERNITY

When you know Eternity, all becomes clear,
Just as when the ocean realizes it is not just a wave,
Or when the gold realizes it is not just a ring,
Or when life realizes it is not just a toad.

When you know Eternity, this little bubble of a universe
Is just a mind-born spectacle tossed out for fun.

When you know Eternity, you don't "see" Eternity; you *are* Eternity;
And you know that's who you've always been.

When you know Eternity, you are no longer a person in the world;
You are that secondless One alone.
But then, the world-illusion returns, like the mind
Slipping into a dream,
Like the sailing of a boat into fog.

Then, once more a person in a place on earth,
Once more ensnared in the illusory self,
Like the ocean reduced to a wave,
Eternity cries for its rightful and unlimited place.

Eternity once known, the world seems the bubble of a dream.
And how could Eternity delight in playing the clown,
Or in chasing illusory dreams?

And yet life goes on; the Dreamer lives on in the dream,
And plays out the complexity of His days.
While He moves and grows old in time's tedious pace,
He silently smiles in the heart of His heart,
And sings joy in the depths of His soul;
For His eye never drifts from the unchanging Face
Of His heavenly Father, His Self.

* * *

WHERE ARE YOU NOW?

He did not come into the world; there was no world.

He didn't come into the space; there was no space.

He invented space and the world with a great "woosh!"

And then a roaring fountain of light that spread out

Like porridge spilt by an invisible Chef on high.

Where are you now? Do you know? Look about!

He invented time to spread out the cooking of his masterpiece.

He invented space to accommodate time.

And the fountain of His light danced into lively forms

To worship Him with love.

Do you court Him in the light? Do you fly to Him at dusk?

Do you see the scattering particles of His love forming your world?

Where are you now? Do you know? Look about!

* * *

THE TWO IN ONE

Look, the Source is one and all that is;
But It has imaged forth within Itself a second: this cosmic array.
Eternally the one great Mind exists alone;
Its universal picture-show comes and goes,
An image on the screen of time.

Eternally, even as the stars play out their birth and death,
The One is undiminished, undivided, undismayed.
For, since the universal drama exists within the one great Mind,
There is no separation, no duality at all.

And yet, while we live and dance in time and space,
We inhabit an imaginary bubble of non-eternity,
Of transient bodies and volitional activities,
A secondary world, unreal.

For "real", by definition, refers only to the Permanent,
The Eternal, the Mind unmanifest and clear.
So what is this unseemly show, this conjured art,
This Mind-dreamt castle-in-the-air
In which we're sentenced to abide?

Alas, it's smoke and mirrors, a magic show,
Of no account, unworthy of note.
For the fact is we've never left our eternal realm;
We delight there even now.

The timeless Self we know as "we" was never
Imprisoned in a bodily shell;
That's but an illusion, a paltry spell that binds us
To the dream of separate personality.

Once freed of duality's deception,
We realize we've never left eternity's bliss.
We're one unparcelled Self, unbound, unsnared forever,
Complete in the completion of the boundless One,
A "we", an "I" that stands triumphantly free, beyond imagined time.

* * *

NONE ELSE

When you're drawn up to the One,
 You'll find yourself alone.
 There's no female at His side;
 No attending angels round about.
 There's no Son sitting nearby;
And no congregation of saints standing there.
 Even "He" is not there.
 Only You are there.

 Not this little form of you;
But You as you never knew you were,
 A nothing Mind, containing all.
 Nothing else is there but You.
There is no Shakti there but You;
 There is no Shiva there but You.
 Purusha as well as Prakriti are You.
 The throngs of souls are You;
 The powers that be are You.
 Wherever You look,
 You see none else but You.

"Alone at last!" You sigh.
 If there is to be an other,
 You must imagine him or her.
The universe you project is You;
 And all the people in it are You.
 There's only ONE, and You are it.

The devotees who chant the name are You;

The universal choir of angels, You.

Whatever *is* is You, conjured by You.

There's none else but You anywhere.

In such a lonely timeless life,

What else is there to do but dream

Up worlds and populate them

With imaginative forms caught up

In crazy, impossible plots and toils?

What else would You do

When there's none else but You?

* * *

NOW, WHILE THERE'S STILL TIME

Now, while there's still time, call on God with a yearning heart!
How swiftly passes this busy life of occupations and obligations.

Too soon, the day is lost to inconsequential chores;
Too soon the months, the years, are lost to scattered aims and fruitless schemes.

Suddenly we awake one morning, and we're old and feeble,
unable to make any effort at all.

And who knows when the end will come?

You may be certain it will come one day –

Perhaps without warning, unannounced;

Perhaps while you walk, or sleep, or play;

Or in between the syllables of a word you start to say.

And when it comes, will your heart leap up and cry, "O glorious day!"?

Or will you beg for just a little time to set things right – the way you'd
always hoped they'd be?

O friend, make now your heart to be as you would have it then.

O now, my friend, while there's still time, call on God with a yearning heart!

Lead your soul to Him who is your true and everlasting home.

He is your joy unlimited, your boundless satisfaction;

Your Lord, your Goal, your Life, your Self.

* * *

GOD, BEING SO CLOSE

God, being so close, is easily accessible to us;
He is always within the reach of our call,
Always ready to provide succor in our need,
And the light of wisdom in our times of darkness.
Our own soul is the conduit of this accessibility,
This communication, this succor and this wisdom.

In our own soul,
when the chattering of the mind is silenced,
And all our attention is focused on His presence,
There He is found in the very qualities of the soul;
For we are rays from His brilliance,
Diminished only by our unwillingness
To manifest His light.

He is the air in our nostrils and the earth under our feet.
He is the light of our eyes and the music in our breast.
He is the bright awareness that lives as you,
And He is the storied tale your living tells.
You dance in His firelight; you float on His sea.
You breathe by His breathing; you move by His joy.

No matter how far you may gaze into the rolling
Galaxies cascading above;
No matter what dark or clownish scenes you dream,
Or terrestrial landscapes you cross;
In the depths of the ocean, or on the chilly
Snow-peaked mountains;
And even in the abyss of death and darkness,
You are ever within His close embrace.

You cannot leave Him, nor skamper from His sight.

For you are in Him as a fish is in the ocean

Or a bird is in the sky.

His love surrounds and holds you,

And He sees all through your eyes.

* * *

WHY WE WERE BORN

The Jews are praising Thee, Lord;
The Christians and Muslims are busy praising Thee as well.
The Hindus and the Sikhs, the Platonists and the Taoists
also sing Thy praise.

The farmers tilling the land have no other goal but to give
praise to Thee;

Even the men and women of science, who hope to ferret out
Thy secrets,
Are engaged unwittingly in praising Thee.

For no one on this earth of Thine can find satisfaction
In anything other than Thy praise.

What other purpose might we have, O Lord?
Why else were we born? Why else would we live
But to joy in giving praise and glory to Thee?

* * *

NO ONE EVER ENLIGHTENED HIMSELF

No one ever enlightened himself,
Though many have taken credit for the feat.
He gave you that brief glimpse, didn't He?
 You did nothing to bring it about;
 It was all His doing, all His grace.
And now you hold classes to teach others
How to become enlightened. What a scam!

In His time, unscheduled by you,
He lit up your mind, parting the ego-veil.
You saw—as far as He allowed you to see,
Revealing that all is His own, all is in Him.
 He allowed you to see with His eyes,
 So you could say: "All this is me!"
But then the old 'you' came back, and now
 You try in vain to lift your vision
 To that holy inside view.

Reform your heart, my friend!
There's no other way, no other key, to that door.

* * *

SONG OF PRAISE

O God, let me sing a song to Thee.

I am just Thy foolish unworthy child, as Thou dost know;
but I beg Thee, let me honor Thee with my song of praise.

After all, I have no other reason for existing but to sing Thy praise.
O God, Thou art so far beyond my vision that I do not know how to
begin to praise Thee.

Thou art hidden beyond this world of my daily experience, invisible to my eye.

But Thou hast shown Thyself to me when I was young.

I know Thy perfect aloneness, untouched by all that transpires here below;
I know Thy timeless face, Thy incomparable peace.

Dear Lord, I can only stammer and write these miserably inadequate words;
for no words are there to speak of Thee.

All that flows from Thee bespeaks Thy bounty;
but Thou art far greater than the sparkling sky, the star-filled cosmos.
Thou art the emptiness from which all bounty flows;
an emptiness that contains nothing, yet gives being to everything.

As winds arise from air, as waves arise from the sea, as dreams arise from the
quieted mind, so does the universe arise from Thee.

Thou art the bearer of happiness, the stirrer of devotion,
the inventor of thought, surprise, and awe.

Thou art the redeemer of error, the mother of love; Thou art the beauty of a
summer's day. O God, whatever is done by Thee.

But why should I remind Thee of Thy works?
It's Thee, above all works, that I adore.
I, who am Thy errant child, whose soul is birthed by Thee,
and who longs to return to Thy womb, am nothing else but Thine.
Displayed into this world, I am Thy own substance,
Thy own imagined form.
And as I'm from Thee, so to Thee shall I return.

No longer image shall I be, but transformed into Thee,
not something other, but Thee entire,
One glowing I, unending, perfect beauty, perfect bliss,
and consciousness absolute.

None of these words, of course, come close to saying what
Thou art; though I searched, I could not find words that tell Thee truly.
Down here, we have no words to describe what Thou art;
and so, once more, my praise falls short.

But we both know Thy true condition; we both know Thy unspeakable place of
being; and we both know it is of that I speak.

Dear Father of my life, my thought, my love,
please accept my pitiful attempt to praise Thee.
Fault me not for my lack of words that tell Thee.

Only grant that I may always love Thee, till I'm once again at home with Thee.
O dear God of Gods, hear my prayer! You know my heart, my heart's desire:
I long to rise above this worldly self to bathe in Thy untroubled Life.
I cannot do it, but only Thou canst bring me there to live in Thee.

O Lord, who art alone, sole Source
And Master of the world, I beg Thee draw my mind and heart to Thee;
let no other love distract me.
Let no dreams or other goals detain me from my journey home to Thee.

PLATO'S CAVE

I lay in chains like all the rest, but even in my youth
I sought a way beyond this gloomy labyrinthine cave.

I'd heard the legends of a land of light, and one day
Broke my chains and began my search, exploring paths
Both dark and narrow where very few had gone before.

Alone, I felt my way through winding passageways,
Leading always upwards toward a dim but beckoning light;
And at last broke free, all unexpectedly bathed in light.

For suddenly, as though lifted on a wind divine,
I was elevated to a heavenly plane
Where I was not the man I'd been before.

The life I'd known beneath the surface,
Where only darkness reigned, was but a distant memory;
As now I beheld a glorious radiance of white engulfing me
And into which I blent.

No flickering fires, no shadowed walls, nor separate
Dancing figures differentiated here; for all was
One free vastness irradiated from above
And bright with clarity so intense I saw for miles
An endless horizon spreading everywhere at once.

In breathless awe I took it in, marveling at the breadth
And scope of this unexpected land to which I'd come,
And breathed the light-filled air so sweet and pure.

There, the very earth was mine and all the starry heavens;
And I was at the center, still, containing all.
I had become the one great light,
Begetting and illuminating every thing and beast;
There was no other to behold, as all combined in me.

And all was perfect everywhere,
Moving toward its perfect end.
No trace of self remained, but only this one eternal Beauty
I beheld shining endlessly in all.

How expansive was the freedom that I felt!
How flawless my delight!
I saw with intimate clarity Eternity's joy-filled peace,
And witnessed the breath-like ebb and flow
Of cosmic birth and death.
For, somehow, I was made to see that all revolved in me;
That I was part and whole, and yet was much, much more:
The still, unchanging eye unbound by time
That watched while time unfurled its transient array.

How long I stood there I cannot know;
Lost in vision's trance, I clung with all my power
To the tenuous gift of sight.
But thoughts rushed back to pull me down,
And I descended from the whiteness into dark once more.
My mind descended once again to self and those I'd left
Still struggling in the darkened cave,
Still unimaginining what bright place lay just above.

I vowed to tell them all what place I'd found and how
They too might rise above their dungeon-life below.
That such a place existed was still unknown to all;
 That life held so much more of joy and light
 And endless vision none had dared to dream.
And soon I found myself returned to the world I'd known,
Below, unlit, where only artificial shadows produced the show.

And yet, sustained within my mind was what I'd seen above;
 And it was this which fired my blood
 And brought to these familiar scenes illumination
 From my memory's so newly acquired delight.

 And as I went among the dreary folk,
 My eyes still brightened by the light I'd found,
I told them of my discovered land, and of the brightness there,
 And how I'd made my way by following the upward trail.

But none believed me. I was an embarrassment
To friends and family who thought I'd lost my mind.
"That's very interesting", they said; "And now it's time for lunch".
While others said, "Everyone has their own ideas, you know;
 I have my own beliefs as well."
And so I learned to keep my knowledge to myself, and spend
 My quiet hours alone, remembering where I'd been.

 And even now, my heart is drawn there still!
 My eyes, still filled with vision of the light I'd seen,
 Were unaccustomed now to dark;
 And though I tried to focus on the customary tasks
 Incumbent on the dwellers here below,

I could not wholly give myself to thoughts
And purposes of men enslaved,
Nor take delight in shadows playing on the walls.

My briefly tasted freedom rendered me unfit
For chains and games that others loved;
My heart was up above.

And so they ask, "What benefit did you derive from your escape?
You journeyed there, or so you say,
And what have you gained but blindness and disdain
For what all men hold dear?"

I have no answer to these taunts. I only know that I have gone
Where I was meant to go, and saw a world
More real, more glorious than this shadowed one below.
I've known the joyful promise which my soul desired;
I reached the goal, the source of joy and light.
And, though I'm here among the rest, I stand there still,
Immersed in light, delighting in the far-flung landscape that I saw.
For in my heart my home is there; I'll live there evermore.

* * *

SONG OF THANKSGIVING

Hari, my love, I wish to sing to Thee a song of Thanksgiving.
Yet, O how I dread the futile search for meaningful words to offer Thee!
My heart is full of thanks and praise for each breath that is granted me,
 But to speak reveals the lie of pretended two-ness that I must tell.
For Thou art my breath, my voice, the Real; and I am but the image;
 I live by Thy uncommon Life, imaged in Thy dream of me.
And yet my gratitude to Thee upwells, as an image in a mirror
 Might admire its own source, its real and original Face;
Or as a dream character might call out praise to its dreaming Self.

Though we are one, not two, I'll speak as though we're separate and apart;
 For how else might I truly speak to Thee?
O Hari, Thou art alone, undiminished by the clatter and glitter
 Of a billion billion images, mere reflections in a house of mirrors;
For Thou art alike the house, the mirrors, and the flitting images as well.
 This speaking too is like the barking of a dog in an empty field;
 For, though it may be heard,
 the silence of the cosmos remains unbroken.
 Yet I, this imagined form, am present — at least in appearance;
And because I'm here, please let me speak to Thee in loving thanks.

O Hari, look how wonderful is this story Thou dost tell!
 Look how beautiful is this body and the life ensouled.
Though all too quickly it will turn to dust, this form is Thine
 And holds Thy greatness and Thy holy light and breath of life.
 Thou, this brightly glowing wakeful knowing;
Thou, this deep and endlessly creative song of light and love
 That bubbles up from Thy unfathomable depths
Within the soul of me to greet each day with joyful thanks.

O Hari, from Thy eternal Goodness and unknowable Repose,
Thou hast issued forth this universe of man and beast
With purpose known only to Thy own delight;
And Thou hast given Thy own thoughts to guide us from within
Through adventures great and small to bring us
Happily to our end in Thy boundlessly blissful Self.
O Hari, it is a most wonderful and admirable drama
Thou hast produced, full of harrowing dilemmas,
Frightful predicaments, and uproarious denouements!

Yet, in the end, we all awake to know one Self,
The Dreamer of this dream, our ever undisturbed Reality.
Always unperturbed, Thou art forever untouched by time,
As the patient sky is ever untouched by passing clouds;
We are where we have always been in truth, never separated
From our constantly enfolding, ever undivided Self;
Where all the fervent lives o'erpassed, like dreams,
Once left behind in waking, hastily retreat from view,
Revealed as the flimsiest of transient illusions.

In waking, we are one in Thee, O Hari!
And in Thee, as Thee, we have always been.
Never imprisoned as we thought in separate forms,
Once reawakened from our dreams, we know our
Ever-undivided and eternal Identity as Thee.
In blissful folds of snow-white radiant Eternity
We rest as Thee in peaceful oneness and joy;
But while I live in pretended separation from Thyself
Let me now offer my song of grateful thanks to Thee,
Who art the Life that lives me, my secret pride and joy;
For it is Thou who hast made Thyself as me.

Dear Father, all that Thou hast made is good,
And all Thy beauteous forms sing praise and thanks to Thee.

Then, let me uplift my voice in song as well

To glorify in praise my gracious Lord:

O Hari, all praise be to Thee in Thy heavenly glory!

All praise be to Thee in Thy universal pageantry of form!

My head is bowed in loving thanks and worship,

Knowing Thou art all and more than all.

Thy grace to me is beyond what my voice can tell;

I can but offer thanks, with hands held high, to Thee,

My ever kind and gracious Lord.

* * *

THOU ART LOVE

Thou art Love, and I shall follow all Thy ways.
I shall have no care, for Love cares only to love.

I shall have no fear, for Love is fearless;
Nor shall I frighten any,
For Love comes sweetly and meek.

I shall keep no violence within me,
Neither in thought nor in deed,
For Love comes peacefully.

I shall bear no shield or sword,
For the defense of Love is love.

I shall seek Thee in the eyes of men,
For love seeks Thee always.

I shall keep silence before Thine enemies,
And lift to them Thy countenance,
For all are powerless before Thee.

I shall keep Thee in my heart with precious care,
Lest Thy light be extinguished by the winds;
For without Thy light, I am in darkness.

I shall go free in the world with Thee –
Free of all bondage to anything but Thee;

For Thou art my God, the sole Father of my being,
The sweet breath of Love that lives in my heart;

And I shall follow Thee, and live with Thee,
And lean on Thee till the end of my days.

* * *

SONG OF THE SELF

O my God, even this body is Thine own!
Though I call to Thee and seek Thee amidst chaos,
Even I who seemed an unclean pitcher amidst Thy waters –
 Even I am Thine own.

Does a wave cease to be of the ocean?
Do the mountains and the gulfs cease to be of the earth?
 Or does a pebble cease to be stone?
 How can I escape Thee?
Thou art even That which thinks of escape!

Even now, I speak the word, "Thou", and create duality;
 I love, and create hatred;
 I am in peace, and am fashioning chaos;
Standing on the peak, I necessitate the depths.

But now, weeping and laughing are gone;
 Night is become day;
 Music and silence are heard as one;
 My ears are all the universe.

All motion has ceased; everything continues.
 Life and death no longer stand apart.
 No I, no Thou; no now, or then.
 Unless I move, there is no stillness.

Nothing to lament, nothing to vanquish,

Nothing to pride oneself on;

All is accomplished in an instant.

All may now be told without effort.

Where is there a question?

Where is the temple?

Which the Imperishable, which the abode?

I am the pulse of the turtle;

I am the clanging bells of joy

I bring the dust of blindness;

I am the fire of song.

I am in the clouds and in the gritty soil;

In pools of clear water my image is found.

I am the dust on the feet of the wretched,

The toothless beggars of every land.

I have given sweets that decay to those that crave them;

I have given my wealth unto the poor and lonely.

My hands are open – nothing is concealed.

All things move together of one accord;

Assent is given throughout the universe to every falling grain.

The Sun stirs the waters of my heart,

And the vapor of my love flies to the four corners of the world;

The moon stills me, and the cold darkness is my bed.

I have but breathed, and everything is rearranged

And set in order once again.

A million worlds begin and end in every breath,

And in this breathing, all things are sustained.